

Panel Presentation: Strategies that Work: Nutrition Network Example
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1995 & 1996 FNS and USDA approved cooperative agreements to establish Nutrition Education Networks in 22 states. There are 21 states with networks in 2004.

What were we to do?

- Establish a network of public-private partners who would work together to reach food stamp audiences.
- Technical assistance was provided in social marketing with the intention that networks would test social marketing strategies to deliver nutrition education messages. Networks were to develop social marketing campaigns for their states.
- Become self-sustaining
- Social marketing training led to greater awareness of the social ecological model (surround approach) that takes into account not only the individual factors in a certain behavior but also the social, cultural, and environmental influences on behavior change. The model recognizes the complexity of dietary behaviors and the need for multiple strategies from each level of influence that creates an environment that then supports the desired behavior change - over time - with the intensity and duration that FNS mentioned yesterday.

So, what has been our journey like since 1995?

What do we look like? We all look a bit different with implementing agencies in public health, Land-Grant Extension programs, other university programs, and non-profits. (This afternoon there is a presentation that will describe the results from a network survey that looked at evaluation strategies.)

Did we develop partners? I'd like to think that we would get high marks in this area. Working with partners has been enjoyable and fruitful. We have partners at many levels: local, state, regional and beyond. We also work well together. The Association of State Nutrition Network Administrators (ASNNA) was formed so that network states could share resources and work together despite coming from different implementing agencies.

I would like to mention public health specifically, as that is where the Iowa Nutrition Network is located and we are the minority group here.

USDA FNS made a strong pitch to public health departments in 1995. Public health departments have many opportunities to work with sister state agencies (departments of education, human services, elder affairs) and collaborate with FNS programs such as WIC, 5 A Day and Team Nutrition. Public Health also has access to programs funded and directed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). These programs have extensive experience with state and community coalitions and have served as role models for our nutrition education coalitions.

Are we self-sustaining? There is great variation among networks in the amount of state cost-share and federal reimbursement. Networks often go to the local level and use traditional

nutrition education strategies to create local cost-share or “match.” The local efforts create the opportunity to draw down federal reimbursement funds to sustain social marketing efforts. The benefit of this dependency on community involvement is the opportunity to develop community nutrition coalitions that become part of the nutrition network. They also assist in the delivery of social marketing campaigns. The downside is the scrutiny that community projects receive (by regional offices) and the incredible amount of time and paper that it takes to manage them well.

What about social marketing? How are we doing?

Several branded programs that are recognized in their respective states. Examples:

California - 5 A Day (many other states as well)

North Carolina – Strive for 5

Arizona - Bobby B

Iowa – Pick a better snack

NJ – Working on a new calcium message. The campaign has extensive evaluation

PA – Gimme 5

We are working toward extending the nutrition campaign messages into the food stamp system. That would include offices where income eligibility takes place. Social marketers follow their target audience. Does that mean that we should be where food stamp families shop, go to worship, attend school, and play? Where do we most effectively reach older adults who are at highest risk for food insecurity?

There was an “ah-ha” for some of us at SNE last year when researchers from Cornell presented a study about food stamp participation over a life span vs. a point in time. In general the results were that 49% of all American children will at some point during their childhood receive food stamps. 51% of Americans between the ages of 20-65 will do so.

When is the best time to capture the “food stamp audience” for nutrition education? I believe that is part of the concern that was expressed yesterday by several of you in the audience.

Networks need to do a better job at quantifying how many FSP participants they are reaching. Many of us are conducting traditional nutrition education blended with social marketing activities. We need to extend our messages in the food stamp offices when it is reasonable to do so, and probably most importantly, when we can afford to do so as little or no match can be squeezed from the current food stamp state budgets.

Partnerships

Quickly I will give you some examples of network activity with partners (not inclusive - I apologize for those I miss)

Oklahoma – survey of food stamp participants provided the foundation for the development of a nutrition education calendar that the survey indicated was desired by participants. They are also using La Cocina Saludable from Colorado for use in county FS offices where nutrition education was not available.

Colorado participates in state-level partnering with other key networks: The Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition and Colorado Anti Hunger Network. Education materials are being shared among nutrition programs: CACFP and WIC are purchasing the *Food Friends* campaign.

Michigan – Eat Health, Eat Breakfast program campaign – very successful with multiple partners and integrated well with Department of Education.

Maine – looking at new message of “Keep your portion in proportion.” Continues to work closely with Team Nutrition.

Kansas – Using a tool from JNEB to quantify the number, type, depth, and strength of partnerships involved in the social marketing of nutrition education.

Georgia has provided extensive assistance to other states to implement the *Take Charge of Your Health* curricula.

Pennsylvania – 75 individuals and partner agencies in their network.

CA, PA, IA - Working to create greater awareness in the public about food insecurity and help communities develop strategies to create greater food security. These networks are participating in or helping to form hunger alliances and food policy councils. They are gathering community tools and reports and placing them on web sites for greater access and unified effort.

California partners with over 300 government, non-profit, and business organizations at the state level.

New Jersey – unique evaluation strategy involving a partnership with grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods. They will be tracking the sales of foods that are good sources of calcium to measure the impact of their social marketing campaign.

South Dakota – works closely with Team Nutrition but not enough funds yet to sustain a social marketing campaign.

West Virginia (new kid on the block) – Network was creating opportunities for greater collaboration with the food stamp offices.

Wisconsin – facilitate collaborative planning of nutrition education programs at state and local levels.

Washington – although their network is moving on from their flagship campaign, *Eat Better; Eat Together*, WIC has been using it extensively.

Future partner opportunities:

Obesity is a cross-cutting issue for nutrition agencies.

In Iowa we are looking forward to collaborating with our public health department on a CDC obesity grant. We hope expand the use of *Pick a better snack* across the state through this grant.

We are working with our Iowa FSP more closely having just printed nutrition education messages on the first set of EBT registers.

Continue our strong collaboration with Extension – planning our first joint training this spring.

Every network has its own story - its own journey. We have appreciated the flexibility provided by FNS to try on different strategies and we are eager and appreciative to be a part of the dialogue, systems review, etc. that will improve our accountability and help FNS get that A from OMB on effective nutrition education.

Network summary is available on the national CSREES site. We will try to mail to food stamp directors and regional/national office.